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Chairman: Mr. Djumala (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Indonesia)

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In the absence of Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal), Mr. Djumala (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*) (A/56/115 and Corr.1-E/2001/92 and Corr.1, A/56/74, A/56/189, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/303, A/56/304, A/56/318, A/56/358, A/56/395)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (*continued*) (A/56/3, A/56/19, A/56/25, A/56/306, A/56/379)

1. **Mr. Staehelin** (Observer for Switzerland) informed the meeting of the Ministerial Statement adopted by the Regional Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Declaration addressed social, economic and environmental policies in a balanced and mutually reinforcing manner. It not only reconfirmed the commitments made at the Rio Summit and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, but also recommended further action at both the global and regional levels. The Declaration sent a strong political message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, by expressing the ECE region's willingness to assume its responsibilities, share its experiences and extend its support to other regions of the world. In that regard, much more needed to be done to address problems such as persistent poverty in many parts of the world, the lack of justice and equality, violations of basic rights, the increasing number of conflicts and global environmental changes, that endangered the long-term survival of humanity.

2. Collective answers must be found to that threat. One answer might be a "global deal" under which each country would make its own contribution to efforts to address the common worldwide challenge of sustainable development. In that regard, Switzerland, as a mountainous country, would make sustainable mountain development its key theme and it hoped to be able to work with other mountainous countries in the promotion and development of mountain-related issues. Other priority themes for Switzerland included freshwater resources, social development and poverty reduction, trade-related issues and governance. In his delegation's view, one of the main challenges of the Johannesburg Summit was defining the elements of such a "global deal". Success in that endeavour would make the Summit a symbol of the ability of the world to address today's challenges and conflicts through constructive discussion and a common search for multiple solutions to multiple problems.

3. **Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) expressed the view that political stability was an important element in achieving sustainable development. Tajikistan, which had experienced armed conflict for many years, attached particular importance to post-conflict peace-building and dialogue among all political forces as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

4. The issue of access to fresh water had been recognized by world leaders as one of the main problems of the twenty-first century. Thus, the Millennium Declaration had decided to reduce by half the number of people who did not have access to safe drinking water by 2015. In that regard, the Third World Water Forum to be held in March 2003 in Kyoto, Japan, would be a good starting point for the International Year of Freshwater. The General Assembly must support the work already started, thus ensuring the success of that extremely useful enterprise. His delegation was prepared to submit a draft resolution on that issue to the General Assembly.

5. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa) said that the implementation of Agenda 21 had been slow; it had been fragmented by the lack of integration between sustainable development initiatives, funding and other critical implementation mechanisms. As a result, developing countries were still faced with short life expectancy, high levels of illiteracy and limited access to basic services such as clean water and health care. Indeed, globalization had resulted in high levels of poverty in developing countries and unacceptable economic imbalances between the countries of the South and the countries of the North. Poverty and equality were the greatest threats to global sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Reversing those inequalities would entail changes in terms of trade, investment and debt relief. However, Governments could not achieve that objective alone and partnerships with business, industry and civil society were critical in that regard. Regional programmes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were ideal as delivery models.

6. The World Summit on Sustainable Development should ensure renewed commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21. The Summit should, in particular, achieve a global consensus on partnership to underpin the Johannesburg Programme of Action coupled with clear targets, delivery mechanisms, resource commitments and monitoring indicators. For that partnership to be effective, the roles and responsibilities of the different partners would have to be clearly defined and agreed upon. The Johannesburg Programme of Action should be based on key priority factors that contributed directly to the eradication of poverty and the reversal of the further economic marginalization of developing countries. The Summit should also address the important question of the international regime for governance. Since the democratization of international governance was essential to the promotion of sustainable development, he hoped that the Summit would agree on strengthened mechanisms for sustainable development governance. With regard to international environmental governance, the Summit should ensure that its review resulted in systems that were less burdensome for developing countries and avoided duplication.

7. The African Preparatory Conference for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Nairobi, had identified the problems facing the continent in the areas of human development, financing of sustainable development, food security, natural resources management, peace, security and stability. Concerning agriculture and food security, African countries had stressed the need for developed countries to open their markets to products from Africa and to eliminate agricultural subsidies. In the view of the African ministers, the Johannesburg Summit should take cognizance of the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Finally, he stressed the importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which laid the foundation for sustainable development in Africa. That initiative envisaged a partnership between Africa and the developed world for the revitalization of the continent.

8. **Mr. Popov** (Belarus) said that the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development was entering a very important stage, with discussion of issues of substance. Belarus fully supported the integrated approach to analysing progress achieved in implementing Agenda 21 in terms of the inter-relationship of national, regional and global aspects. Consideration of substantive issues had to balance the interests and needs of States at very different stages of socio-economic development. Belarus itself, a country with an economy in transition, had been one of the first of the newly independent States to develop and implement national strategies on sustainable development.

9. Turning to individual aspects of the implementation of Agenda 21, Belarus considered that priority attention should be paid to new issues not reflected in the global document and also to issues on which progress had been insignificant or had become very difficult. The key issues were financing and the transfer of technologies for sustainable development. Unfortunately, the question as to how to make investment in sustainable development processes attractive had so far received no acceptable universal answer. In preparations for the World Summit, new opportunities and mechanisms should be thoroughly worked out for financing sustainable development measures, and existing mechanisms should be looked at critically and specific recommendations put forward to improve them. The most important aspect of preparations for Rio +10 was that of further strengthening the role and authority of the basic environmental conventions, and particularly international cooperation to strengthen the potential of developing countries and countries with economies in transition effectively to perform their obligations under those conventions.

10. **Mr. Rim** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that it was essential, if sustainable development and economic growth were to be achieved, for all nations to implement the Rio Declaration and political commitments on the environment and development, and to enhance international cooperation in that regard. The gap between developing and developed countries had widened further because of the negative effects of globalization. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption had been forced on the developing countries by the developed countries, causing deterioration of the global environment.

11. The developed countries should take practical and action-oriented measures to bring into effect and implement the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible, despite the unilateral and irresponsible decisions of some countries which tried to subordinate the issue to their own economic interests. His country called upon

them to ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible.

12. Financial resources and technologies must be transferred from the developed countries to the developing countries, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of investment must be expanded so that developing countries could contribute to resolving global environmental problems by protecting their environment and achieving sustainable development. The international organizations had to intensify their cooperative activities so that developing countries could achieve genuine progress in sustainable development.

13. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, protection of the environment was guaranteed by law, and the Government was implementing Agenda 21; his delegation gave an assurance of his country's active participation in international endeavours on behalf of its implementation.

14. **Mrs. Sharifah Zarah** (Malaysia) said that in the ten years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development little had changed and that the principles and practices of sustainable development enshrined in Agenda 21 were not truly being implemented. Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration had not been the major reference points for international negotiations and diplomacy, as had been intended. The world remained sharply divided between rich and poor, and the global environment continued to deteriorate at an alarming rate. The principle of burden sharing according to the economic development criteria of countries had been honoured more in the breach than the observance. Despite an impressive number of documents from many important high-level meetings, the United Nations had failed to determine the means of implementation.

15. International environmental diplomacy remained sluggish, with negotiations centring on a search for lowest common denominators and the resultant regulatory arrangements then embarking upon the slow journey of implementation by States, with verification sometimes proving impossible. Recent political developments on the economic and environmental fronts illustrated the lack of political will for global action in the quest for the "common future".

16. In preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it was therefore necessary to be more critical in examining the progress made and the results achieved since the Rio Conference. There should be no finger-pointing at what the North had or had not done or at what the South required but did not have. Agenda 21 did not place the onus of change upon the South or treat sustainable development as being possible only after the achievement of economic development or being possible in the South only after the North had first cleaned up its own house.

17. Enough time had been spent defining "sustainable development", and it was time for action. The issue of "means of implementation" had to be addressed; without the provision of financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and institutional development, Agenda 21 would be meaningless.

18. The United Nations should play a greater role not only in enhancing political commitments but also in translating them into tangible terms. At the very least, it should coordinate effectively at the macro level with a view to influencing the decisions and deliberations of other relevant international institutions, particularly IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. The straitjacket of the traditional division of labour between the United Nations and those agencies must disappear. Since the processes involved in preparing for the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development were interrelated and critical to the full implementation of Agenda 21, the United Nations must secure for itself a greater role as the focal point and development catalyst for sustainable development.

19. The main objective of the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be to ensure that the commitments made at Rio were honoured. Greater efforts must be made to translate those commitments into reality within specific time frames. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be the framework for enhanced international cooperation and strengthened and renewed global partnership between North and South in achieving the goal of sustainable development. The success of the World Summit would be judged by whether it papered over differences and aimed at the lowest common denominators for a meaningless consensus or achieved a truly global compact to implement the commitments made a decade ago for the common good and well-being of all humanity.

20. **Ms. Foo** (Singapore), associating her delegation with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the task of achieving sustainable development had not been made easier with the passage of time. Increasing environmental challenges had become truly globalized and transboundary in nature.

21. Singapore itself, as a small and heavily populated island State, needed to urbanize in order to sustain economic growth, and the question was how it could design and manage its urban settlements in an environmentally responsible manner. It had no choice but to regard environmental protection seriously as the only way of keeping Singapore habitable. It had therefore based its environmental policies and programmes on the principle of balancing development and environment. Economic growth had been achieved without compromising the environment, but a growing population, increased consumerism and limited natural endowment made it increasingly onerous for Singapore to maintain environmental sustainability.

22. Environmental protection was indisputably a global public good which called for collective action from the global community. Combined national and international responses were critical in dealing with the complexities of environment and sustainable development. Singapore was most willing to share its experience in urban management, urban transport planning and design, water and waste water engineering and environmental management through such programmes as the Singapore Technical Assistance Programme for Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States Technical Cooperation Programme.

23. The opportunity provided by the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development should be seized, and an honest appraisal made of the implementation of Agenda 21. Significant measures should be taken to address areas where further actions were needed.

24. **Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that, in its interventions at the regional ministerial meetings for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was focusing on two global initiatives that directly affected the extent to which industry could contribute to sustainable development, namely, the GATT negotiations and creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Agenda 21. Most developing countries had become increasingly marginalized in those two global initiatives and were not benefiting from trade liberalization. Although the developing world had raised its share of global manufacturing value added (MVA) over time, the increase had come largely from the rapid growth of the newly industrializing economies (NIEs). The share of the least developed countries had stagnated at 0.3 per cent from 1980 onwards. Similarly, developing countries as a whole were not participating in the global trend towards reduction of the pollution intensity of manufacturing activities. Most of the few developing countries that were benefiting from trade liberalization had reduced the pollution intensity of their manufacturing sector; unfortunately, those benefits were often offset by an increase in total pollutant loadings due to increased production.

25. Fifteen developing countries were participating in and taking advantage of those two global initiatives. The factor that appeared to be common to all those countries was the ability of their manufacturing sector to improve its competitive position through technological change. That had been possible because they had taken advantage of advanced technologies that would improve the economic and environmental performance of their industrial sector.

26. An example of how different technologies were being combined in ways that contributed to both trade facilitation and environmental protection in the African region was the recently completed UNIDO project for food safety in seven sub-Saharan countries. In light of the strong evidence of the benefits of technology synergies, UNIDO believed that the Summit needed to put forward specific proposals on how to make the new round of trade liberalization and global environmental agreements support the quest for sustainable development. Technical cooperation programmes and projects were needed to help ensure that all parts of the world, including the least developed countries, were integrated into global economic and environmental networks in a mutually beneficial way. UNIDO was working to ensure such integration with its ongoing 18 national integrated programmes and its regional programmes for West Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), all of which were contributing to agro-based trade facilitation that was

supportive of environmental protection. It was also working to ensure that as many countries as possible had the capacity to secure funding for projects supportive of the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and the Stockholm Convention in ways that would be supportive of trade facilitation. Integration of those two global initiatives had the potential to maximize the contribution of industrial expansion of developing countries to fairer and socially responsible sustainable development.

27. UNIDO was also finalizing its contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In particular, it was working on an initiative in the area of technology needs assessment and promotion of technology and knowledge transfers.

28. **Mr. Yampolsky** (Ukraine) said that his country attached great importance to the implementation of sustainable development policy. Environmental protection activities should be geared towards development of legal and methodological bases for natural resources management, environmental protection and nuclear safety, as well as towards ensuring their effective implementation. His Government had recently signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, had acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and was preparing to accede to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. Ukraine would do its best to contribute to the practical implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and hoped that the seventh Conference of Parties to the Convention would be able to forge consensus on those issues that remained outstanding, thus creating favourable conditions for ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

29. The forthcoming review of the progress achieved since the Rio Summit should identify newly emerging problems and establish priorities for action, in order to give a strong impetus for further implementation of the principles and provisions of Agenda 21. The World Summit on Sustainable Development should concentrate on major global concerns such as poverty eradication, environment and health, good governance, sustainable use and conservation of energy and natural resources, promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns and making globalization work for sustainable development. Its outcome should reaffirm the commitment of the participating countries to sustainable development, based on economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Political commitments at the highest level were vitally important.

30. Ukraine attached great importance to regional cooperation on environmental issues and appreciated the activities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in that regard. His Government was already preparing for the fifth ministerial conference on the Environment for Europe process, to be held in Kiev in 2003.

31. Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification should not be viewed in isolation from other efforts to promote sustainable development. His Government was actively working to finalize the process of accession to that Convention.

32. **Mr. Sarun** (Cambodia), said that, since environmental problems knew no boundaries, a variety of threats deriving from environmental degradation could affect both the developed and the developing world. The widening gap between the developed and developing countries posed a serious challenge. In spite of progress towards implementing the Programme of Action for sustainable development, much remained to be done.

33. Cambodia welcomed the establishment of the high-level advisory panel, which would contribute to the success of the Summit. Cambodia was privileged to be the host for the Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Development, to be held in late November. His delegation wished to acknowledge the support it had received from the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme.

34. In dealing with poverty alleviation in Cambodia, his Government had defined environmental issues as one of the top priorities of the national agenda for social and economic development. The national environmental action plan incorporated the environmental concerns set forth in Agenda 21 and other relevant environmental instruments. During 1999 and 2000, it had reformed the forestry and fisheries sectors with the aim of preventing and combating illegal logging and building a better forestry management system. Reforms were also under way in

other sectors devoted to the preservation and management of natural resources. The legal framework was being adapted to strengthen institutional capacities. His Government also encouraged the participation of different stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in the decision-making process.

35. Cambodia was also committed to implementing the environmental action plans proposed by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address regional concerns, including the zero-burning policy. Cambodia had joined the world community in its struggle to overcome the fundamental issues of global warming. While acknowledging the outcome of the last Conference in Bonn, his Government urged adoption of the official documents, which would pave the way for practical implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.